

# MEGA VORE

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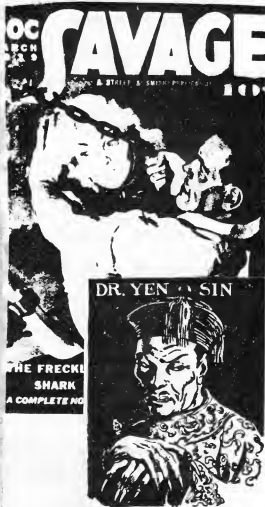
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Also, JAMES H. SCHMITZ & JOHN VARLEY BIBLIOGRAPHIES  
THE SKIPPER THE PHANTOM  
TIPS ON BREAKING INTO THE PRO RANKS  
REVIEWS LETTERS

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## THE FIGHTING FURY

by

Link Hullar  
and  
Will Murray

"I Take What I Want When I Want It!" So read the editorial cover blurb on the first issue of THE SKIPPER, December 1936. These blurbs, notable quotes from the Skipper himself, were a standard of the magazine covers and included such tough-guy gems as "Life's a scrap. Stand up, don't run!" and "Don't borrow trouble but if you do, pay it back!" These short snappy quips from the magazine's hero were characteristic of this pulp and the hero: hard hitting, uncompromising, and poorly developed.



The Skipper, Captain John Fury, was created by Street and Smith circulation director, Henry W. Ralston. Ralston, who created most of the Street and Smith characters including Doc Savage, the Whisperer, the Avenger, and others, doubtless wrote the outline for the character of Cap Fury and possibly even sketched out the story breakdown for the first novel. From the beginning THE SKIPPER was to be a variant of the successful Doc Savage formula, as the Whisperer was a Shadow variant. THE SKIPPER'S angle, or gimmick, was sea stories just as Bill Barne's was aviation and neither character was destined to a long career as a lead character in his own magazine.

THE SKIPPER, along with THE WHISPERER, was born from a desire to capitalize on the success of Street and Smith's popular DOC SAVAGE and SHADOW series. However, both of these titles were not simple imitations of these leading pulp titles but were instead variations on the popular characters; variations with important differences. In the case of THE SKIPPER the high moral tone which



MARA—the Black Leopard Princess

SKIPPER the high moral tone which pervades the Doc Savage stories is gone. Cap Fury is a harsh, at times brutal character, whose sense of justice is considerably different from the ideology of Doc. In THE SKIPPER readers were treated to violence, nudity, and at type of cold death-dealing vengeance not witnessed in the pages of its inspiration and predecessor.

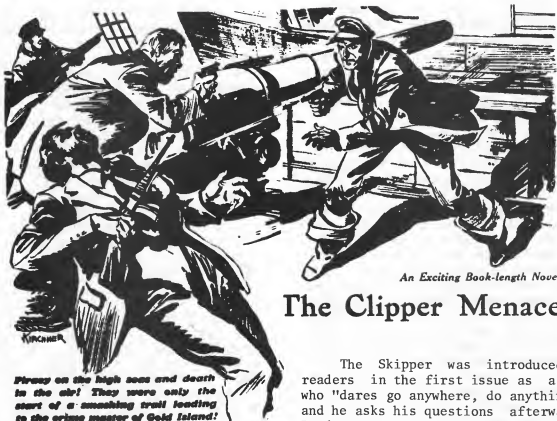
These innovations were no accident. John L. Nanovic edited both DOC SAVAGE and THE SKIPPER which indicates that the different emphasis and atmosphere in THE SKIPPER represented a deliberate Street and Smith sales tactic. This idea was confirmed by Nanovic in the December 1936 issue of WRITER'S DIGEST where he informed potential contributors that "THE SKIPPER is thoroughly adult in its appeal -- not at all juvenile as some people surmised from the first cover." By 1936 Street and Smith was concerned over the growing popularity of competing hero pulp titles such as THE SPIDER and OPERATOR 5. The sex and violence in THE SKIPPER were designed to capture a new and different reading audience than the Doc reader while capitalizing on the hero pulp formula. If this indeed was their intention they could not have chosen a better author than Laurence Donovan, who wrote the series under the name Wallace Brooker.



CAP FURY

Donovan had written for SPICY DETECTIVE in 1934 and would go on to write both Phantom Detective and Black Bat stories. His writing is characteristically brutal; filled with the qualities Street and Smith was seeking -- violence and a touch of sexual sadism. While Donovan's Doc stories were often very good and excellent at their best (MURDER MELODY, HE COULD STOP THE WORLD, and many others), his Skipper work lacked development and polish. The stories and characters are one-dimensional - flat, stale, and lacking in that special quality possessed by the finest of pulp heroes - duende. The differences in quality may lie in the fact that with Doc the writer had a character and supporting cast already clearly developed and a writing style to follow from Doc stories by Dent. With the Skipper Donovan was on his own and he did not fare well.

Street and Smith had recruited Donovan to write Doc stories with the hope of going twice monthly with the bronze hero. When this idea fell through the writer was shifted to THE



An Exciting Book-length Novel

## The Clipper Menace

*Plunged on the high seas and death in the air! They were only the start of a smashing trail leading to the crime master of Gold Island!*

SKIPPER project under editor Nanovic. Donovan was also assigned to write THE WHISPERER so that the author wrote the two series in tandem; neither was to prove a great success. Although THE SKIPPER survived for twelve issues it never really got off the ground.

Poor packaging plagued THE SKIPPER from the beginning. The covers, by L.D.T. (Lawrence Toney), are unexciting in both concept and execution. The magazine was padded with numerous interior illustrations left over from the old SEA STORIES magazine which had no relevance to the story content of the issue. Furthermore, even the title was poorly chosen. THE SKIPPER hardly evokes the "hard-hitting, two-fisted, swashbuckling" image the editors were seeking. Cap Fury, or Cap, as the Skipper is commonly called, would have been a more appropriate title -- Doc Savage; Cap Fury -- the similarity is obvious now and would have been obvious to readers conditioned to react to the sound patterns of DOC SAVAGE magazine.

The Skipper was introduced to readers in the first issue as a man who "dares go anywhere, do anything -- and he asks his questions afterward." Readers were assured that "there is no one with red blood in him who will not admire this fighting Fury." The first entry in the Skipper series was titled THE RED HEART PEARLS and began with the Dent-style opening "Death pursued the man in the yellow slicker." The man in the yellow slicker, who was indeed pursued by death, brought word to Cap that his brother, Captain Tom Fury, had been killed. As with Doc in THE MAN OF BRONZE, Cap Fury hits the vengeance trail and the series is off.

Similarities between Doc and Cap turn up throughout the first and other adventures. Cap's basic physical appearance is very dissimilar from Doc's; he has "flaming red hair" and was "stocky" or "chunky". But his eyes were "sharp arctic blue" and "denoted him as a man of action." The Skipper's eyes were often interjected into the story and were always a major portion of his description; they were "as cold as bits of Arctic ice" and went well with his "icy voice." Donovan had picked up many ideas and gimmicks while writing Doc stories and these turn up constantly in the pages

of THE SKIPPER. Like Doc, Cap has the abilities to fix faces in his mind, lip read, and move "like the lithe action of a jungle cat." Cap uses the familiar nerve centers in the neck to put an enemy to sleep - "One of Cap's square-ended thumbs pushed suddenly into the chords of the native's neck. The headman ceased speaking instantly, and his eyes closed. He sagged as inertly as if he were dead." Gadgets also made their appearance in the stories but they are not as clever or as interesting as the devices utilized by Doc. Cap's gadgets include oxygen masks and hypodermics stored in his great sea boots, which the reader quickly recognizes as Doc's old utility vest in disguise. Disguises are another feature borrowed from the Man of Bronze. The Skipper disguises himself with wigs, eye shells, and other devices numerous times during the course of this series. Like Doc, Fury inserts himself into dangerous situations in order to draw out the enemy, he often works alone so as to protect his aides from danger, and "seldom took others into his confidence" concerning the solution to various mysterious happenings until all of his theories were proven and the crooks were rounded up or exterminated.



PETER DOOM

And here is where Cap Fury and Doc Savage parted company. The Doc Savage code was noble, humanitarian, and moralistic, Cap Fury's code was harsh and filled with a desire for vengeance. In the first story after Cap has found the remains of his dead brother the following scene occurs: "Standing there...looking at the white bones of his brother, Captain John Fury uttered a vow. 'Whenever and wherever I come upon these men, or others of their kind, they shall suffer ten times for every broken finger of my brother.'" Cap was a man of his word. Cap and his men executed cruel and brutal justice. The Skipper, while more restrained than his aides and crew members, was not adverse to dealing in death and torture. His automatic pistol is used to kill - "Cap's automatic snapped once..the one who had shot the police guard, twisted on his heels and sat down in a queer position. Over this right eye appeared a round, blue hole." To make captives talk he would use his own effective truth serum - - "the old whipping post." The old whipping post "looked like an old wooden cross. It was a great, clumsy affair of teakwood. This wood was so old it was pitted...There were only two parts of iron. There were wrist manacles stapled into the horizontal arm of the cross." When about to use the whipping post in BREATHLESS ISLAND Fury comments that criminals "are coddled too much by the shore law. They need some of the salt of the sea." In spite of striking similarities between Doc Savage and the Skipper the differences make all the difference. The Fighting Fury is indeed a "fighting fool" as the magazine's editors once described him and the character is never able to transcend his violent nature and develop in any other way. The reader knows Cap Fury only as a "two fisted" crimefighter of the seas and nothing more. Action is all that holds the stories together. Plot, story, mood, and characterization are sacrificed to fast paced violent action and if the character of the Skipper is poorly developed the characters of his aides and crew members are almost

nonexistent.

Cap's aides play a minor role in the series in comparison to such series as DOC SAVAGE and THE AVENGER making a full comparison impossible. While the Skipper's associates are in many cases variations on different Doc aides and predecessors of certain members of the Avenger's team, these characters in most cases are not central to the story and, like Cap Fury, remain undeveloped.

The only close associate of the Skipper who is not a sailor or crew member is Peter Doom. Doom is described in the first issue as "A policeman who made it so tough for crooks, the politicians got him out. Now he is on his own, and he's still a terror to the underworld." He does not remain "on his own" for long for soon he is teamed up with the Fighting Fury in a war against crime. In Doom can be found elements of Johnny and Renny and a possible foreshadowing of Fergus MacMurdie; he is "a fellow so tall and thin, it looked as if he might break in two. He was wearing a long black coat, and a black hat with a round crown and brim. This gave him the appearance of an undertaker." Doom's description is also similar to Donovan's Whisperer; no coincidence since he was writing both series at the same time. Peter Doom used two big revolvers, referred to as "Police Positives", was possessed of a "funereal countenance", had "solid black eyes", and was "given to bursts of temper". His favorite expressions revolved around the various colors of hell such as "By all the blue-green hells!", "By all the purple hells!", "By all the green-blue hells!", and on and on without much imagination. He is tough, honest, and believes in the Skipper's brand of justice and the two are drawn together in the course of the first adventure. However, before this match is made the two men meet one another in a toe to toe fist fight which gives each a healthy respect for the other's abilities. As a character Doom is one of the most important of

Cap's small band of aides but, like the magazine itself, lacks duende or charisma. He is as colorless as his clothes--a statement which certainly does not apply to the other major Skipper aide, Spike Briggs.

James Jonathan "Marlin Spike" Briggs, the Monkish character in the Skipper's crew, is just as one-dimensional as the others - - however, that one dimension is flamboyant and colorful. Spike is the Skipper's tough first mate whose "countenance had been carved from time to time in many ports, with everything from knives to broken bottles". His exclamatory remarks have a bit more variety than do Peter Doom's but two of his favorites are "Sweet Davy Jones!" and "By the great hornspoon!" - - one of his most imaginative exclamations in the entire series was the memorable "Well, I'll be the spawn of a jelly-fish!". Spike is a full participant in the violent action of these stories and, like Monk, often tends to overdo and become carried away in his murderous zeal. Doom and Spike are the two major supporting characters but the series is cluttered with numerous other minor figures even less important to the magazine's adventures.

Hurricane Dan Belmont, the second mate, is a "giant" with "thick black hair from his head to his waist" (shades of Smitty and Monk) whose favorite expression seems to be "Holy mackerel!". Third mate Cock-eye is hardly more than a name. James "Bumps" McCarthy is "a roly-poly, red-haired young man". He was "known as 'Bumps' because of his constantly getting himself into jams". He was the "ace cameraman of Super-World News Films" and followed the Skipper for news reel footage and excitement. The owners of Cap's ship were represented by Chairman of the Board G.R.M. "Grump" Rollins. This "strange old man" figures into several of the stories in a minor role and has a "face that was a whole series of bulges. His jaws bulged under his



ears. When he was mad, which was three-fourths of the time, his eyes bulged and threatened to pop out." The cast of characters is almost completed with the numerous but usually nameless crew members. They are a tough group of fighting men and excellent sailors with, as one visitor comments "the hardest faces" he had ever seen. In spite of their excellent sailing and fighting abilities it emerges in one story that "it was notorious among most of the sailors that they could not swim".

An interesting character in the series is Princess Mara, Mara von Jean, the Black Leopard Princess of the Indo-China jungle. Introduced in THE BLACK LEOPARD PRINCESS (January 1937) Mara is the Pat Savage of the Skipper series. She had been rescued during the course of her first adventure by Cap and his crew and brought back to the United States where she was adopted by Grump Rollin. While she was supposed to be in a girls' school near Boston in reality, like Pat, she preferred excitement and Cap Fury meant excitement. She was blond with a beautiful figure and "skin of golden, coppery hue". She is a female Tarzan, an odd coincidence since John Nanovic's nickname for Pat was Tarzana. In any event, she completes the cast of characters which fill the pages of THE SKIPPER magazine. All are shades or variations of Doc and his aides as is floating Eighty-Sixth Floor, the WHIRLWIND.

Cap's ship is the WHIRLWIND and while the ship appears to be a shabby, run-down, "rusty sided tanker" it is in fact an extraordinary fighting machine. Its disguise as a "tramp tanker" conceals a superpowered ship which can move at speeds of nearly one hundred miles an hour and is equipped with numerous weapons, gadgets, and comfortable living quarters. The wheelhouse is armor plated. Weapons include various types of guns,

grapplers, and "dockage space in the lowest hold, where amphibian planes of extraordinary design, with folded wings, lay beside other smaller craft and a cigar-shaped vessel that could be no other than a small submarine". This remarkable vessel continues to surprise the villains each adventure even though one would think that they would catch on to the Skipper's secret. Living quarters and other facilities are elaborately furnished with oriental rugs and other items which "had been gathered from a hundred foreign ports. Carved Chinese chairs and tables comprised the chief luxury equipment of the room". Cap Fury and his men lived well and worked in luxury. In many respects the WHIRLWIND harbors beneath her rusty decks Doc's eighty-sixth floor headquarters. Donovan had picked up a great many ideas while writing the adventures of Doc Savage. Unfortunately all he learned was the gimmicks; he never mastered Dent's style or abilities to weave a good story.

The Skipper stories are often good fun but rarely exciting or capable of fully capturing the reader's imagination. The stories are not well developed or even well written mystery-adventures. Neither does the action and adventure of the novels grip the reader. When the stories do manage to break away from the mundane they escape to the bizarre, where Laurence Donovan worked well. Donovan's Doc stories are among the most fantastic of the series, heavily oriented toward the science-fiction genre. That his imagination sometimes got the best of him appears obvious from an anecdote related by Walter Gibson. Gibson recalls overhearing Donovan outline a Skipper plot to editor Nanovic which involved a criminal who manufactured fake icebergs in order to wreck ships. A seaplane would settle in the ocean ahead of a ship, manufacture the iceberg and take off, leaving the ship to collide with the newly developed berg. This absurd idea of generating



an iceberg in slat water was given a horse laugh by Nanovic and is a good example of Donovan's creative ability. Unable to depend on characterization and exciting prose, he attempted to attract the reader's attention through the use of the unusual and the bizarre - - giant man-eating clams, huge turtles, and sadistic sexual situations.

The sexual content of the Skipper novels is of the nature typical of the "Spicy" titles of pulp fiction. Evil villains leer and threaten half naked young women. Often these helpless females are trapped in bizarre situations such as in BREATHELESS ISLAND when the soft young Tarna Rodens is tied to a giant turtle slowly moving out into a barracuda-filled island lagoon. Throughout this ordeal Donovan comments on the girl in a tantalizing fashion: "every revealed curve of her lithe body", "beautiful legs", "slim legs", and "the white body of the girl" are the types of suggestive images used by the author in a pre-popular porno day. In THE CLIPPER MENACE the villain extorts ransom from his captives by having them watch the torture of a young girl in the following manner: "...he lifted the slender, doll-like figure of Marian Dawes. The girl was clad only in the thinnest of garments. Even her shoes and stockings had been removed....The thinly-clad body of the girl was laid across the cold, blue ice...Marian Dawes's slight, perfectly formed body became convulsed with her frenzied effort to escape the stinging chill of the ice cake. That pretty figure contracted visibly on the cold, blue slab of ice. A hysterical scream quivered from the girl's throat." Illustrations of these scenes are often added to Donovan's "Spicy" prose emphasizing the fact that these situations were no accident but rather conscious editorial policy. Mara was the exception to the "helpless female" image of The Skipper pulps. Like her DOC SAVAGE counter-part Pat, Mara was

involved in the tough "two-fisted" action of the series. Unlike Pat, however, Mara's sensual sexuality is fully developed. Her adventures find her in torn dresses and her figure "scantily clad" and even Mara must be rescued by the Skipper and the WHIRLWIND's fantastic crew. Mara is a more "adult" version of Pat Savage. A new approach for Street and Smith designed to capture a different reading audience; the publishers were apparently not pleased with the title for it lasted only twelve issues.

The magazine came to an end with the December 1937 issue. This story, THE GREEN PLAGUE, was to be the last time readers would experience the full force of the Fighting Fury and he remained a harshly violent Skipper throughout the final story. In the closing pages of this last novel Cap Fury is once again at the old whipping post in the following scene: "Judge Thatcher's fear-filled voice rang out. 'You will be hanged for this! You can't do this to me! No man can invoke the law of the dark ages!' His words were cut off by an icy, chilling laugh. That laugh came from The Skipper. The black whip writhed in the air. The forked lashes cut across the back of Judge Thatcher. The skin separated into great welts. Judge Thatcher screamed, for he was not a man of nerve. The whip swished again..." Captain John Fury and company had not changed during the course of the magazine's brief run and now it was too late for change. THE SKIPPER along with its companion Shadow variation THE WHISPERER were cancelled in a company purge of sorts and not necessarily due to poor sales. It was too bad. While not one of the great pulps THE SKIPPER had been fun and the idea of the pulp was a good one. Perhaps under the authorship of a more creative and innovative individual the stories might have developed a character of their own instead of remaining a shallow variation of DOC SAVAGE. This was not to be however, as the Skipper moved to

a short feature in the back of DOC SAVAGE for the remainder of his pulp career. In the process two Skipper novels already written and submitted by Donovan became superfluous to the purposes of the series. These novels were THE MURDER MAKER and THE DIAMOND DEVIL. THE MURDER MAKER was revised and cut for MYSTERY (May 1941) where it appeared under the same title but with the name of Jack Storm attached to the story. THE DIAMOND DEVIL appeared in MYSTERY (July 1942) as THE DEVIL OF DIAMONDS under the pen-name Wallace Brooker, which had been attached to the Skipper series. In both cases all references to the Skipper were deleted before publication making them non-descript mystery-adventure stories at best. THE SKIPPER was no more.



While THE SKIPPER as a magazine had passed from the pulp scene, the Skipper as a character was alive in the pages of DOC SAVAGE. Editors announced in at least three places in the last issue of THE SKIPPER that the character would be moving into the pages of DOC SAVAGE. The news flash

went as follows: "With this issue of THE SKIPPER we are discontinuing the present magazine and combining The Skipper novel and features with another Street & Smith publication - DOC SAVAGE....In combining THE SKIPPER with DOC SAVAGE, we are giving our readers much more for their money....The November issue of Doc Savage carries the first Skipper story in combination with the other features. Don't miss that issue!" Of course, the Skipper shorts included in the back pages of DOC SAVAGE could never be classified as novels by any stretch of the imagination. Many of the minor characters were dropped in the transition and the war is the dominate theme of these unimportant pieces of short fiction. If the Skipper novels had lacked any unique and exciting characteristics, the bland nature of the shorts made the novels spell binding by comparison. Even the Skipper did not deserve such an inglorious end. The appearance of a Skipper story in CRIME BUSTERS (September 1939) may have been an attempt at reviving the title, as was later done with THE WHISPERER. If so, it was not considered successful by the publishers and the Skipper continued as a short feature through the December 1943 issue of DOC SAVAGE.

Laurence Donovan continued with the Skipper character for about a year, submitting his last story, "Death's Pay-Off Man", in October, 1938. Donovan's shorts are simply Skipper novels in miniature. Many of these stories take place in United States waterways - with some locations in the South Seas and South America - and the chief villains are a variety of crooks and pirates. Just like old times; the action is the story and the story is the action. Not all of Fury's men are present in the shorts but of the regular crew Hurricane Dan Belmont and Marlin Spike Briggs are most often featured. Peter Doom, Cap's right-hand man in the magazine series, wanders in and out of the stories with occasional appearances. Mara von Jean is present for the "Big



arred face was lifted  
the water.

was lucky the *Whirl*.

turn. A sleek, blond head was shaken. A mass of finest yellow honey-hair floated away from the jungle girl's perfect features.

The black leopard princess clung with one hand to the rudder of the old tanker. Her blue eyes were intensely watchful. The rounded throat was throbbing as the girl drew in deep breaths.

The girl's free arm supported Spike's shoulders. It might have been either a smile or a look of scorn which came into her eyes. Perhaps this was the first time she had got a good look at the chief officer's scarred face.

Cypress Doom' and Donovan treats us to her final appearance in his final entry of the series, "Death's Pay-Off Man", which is also the last appearance of Grump Rollins. In the midst of this block of Donovan stories lies one tale by William Bogart. Bogart's "Quest of Death" is a minor entry which takes place in Alaska. The author had obviously read a Donovan novel where Cock-eye was mentioned, for the elusive third mate turns up in this short. The Bogart story was an exception to the rule however since Donovan had dominated

the series since its inception. With the submission of Laurence Donovan's last story the series floundered a bit until hitting upon another author and a theme to temporarily sustain the sinking Skipper.

For a while the Wallace Brooker pen-name alternated between Harold A. Davis and Norman Daniels (Danberg). According to a letter to Lester Dent, Davis, who wrote four of the Skipper shorts, had made an arrangement to ghost Skipper novels for Donovan

before the magazine's cancellation. Donovan's departure finally gave Davis his opportunity to work with the character but for some reason he did not stay with the series. These stories offer no exceptions to standard Skipper fare with Davis carrying on in the tradition established by Donovan and bringing to the shorts some of the gimmicks and flavor picked up from his Doc writings - a brief period of his career that paralleled his Skipper work. While Harold A. Davis's stint with Cap Fury was brief, the next Wallace Brooker would carry the series through to its conclusion.

Norman Daniels wrote twenty-four of the Skipper shorts; more than any other contributor to the series. Daniels submitted his first story in February of 1939, "The Sea Vulture". For the next year his contributions were broken up by entries from Harold A. Davis but with "Ghost of Neighbor Island" published in the May 1940 issue of DOC SAVAGE the series became his and he became the new Wallace Brooker. The war in Europe had begun to creep into the stories as early as the Davis short "Submarine Strategy" (July 1939) but with Daniels this theme is picked up and comes to dominate Cap's final adventures. With "The Skipper Goes to War" Fury turns his full attention to the international conflict. Even the occasional appearances of Peter Doom are dropped and only Spike and Hurricane Dan accompany the Skipper on his wartime adventures. These stories are almost plotless engagements with the enemy. They have little connection with the former series except for the characters and the identity of the characters is of such little consequence that if the names were changed the stories would be indistinguishable from other patriotic wartime adventures that regularly appeared in pulp pages. Captain John Fury's career was winding down to an overdue finish. Cap's career had really ended with the passing of THE

SKIPPER magazine. Some of the blood and thunder from the magazine had carried over into Donovan's shorts but even this faded quickly. Daniels' "The Grim Pilot" (December 1943) marks the Skipper's last appearance.

The Skipper was gone. One of the first casualties of the war and the dying pulp era. If the character's passing was mourned by readers I am not aware of their concern. While The Fighting Fury from the beginning had been only a variation of a more popular, more dynamic character. As a short feature, Cap's status was further reduced to the role of filler in that character's magazine. Finally, by the end of 1943, Cap Fury was obscured by the bronze shadow of his inspiration -- Doc Savage.

#### PHONE CALL FROM ROBERT ADAMS

Robert Adams [author of the Horsecrans books] advises that he will have a new Horsecrans novel due out about April. Starting in the July 1981 issue, Amazing will start to print a series of novelets in the Horsecrans series, some of which will later be used in books in that series.

Robert recently returned from Florida, where he spent some time with Andre Norton. He advises me that Andre has recently done extensive re-writing on a book shortly to be printed. Since her name does not appear on the book, he wanted me to make her fans aware of it. The book will be released in January by Fawcett in their Coventry Romance series (#90). It is MAID-AT-ARMS by Enid Cushing. Andre Norton is currently doing similar re-writing on another book by the same author, a resident of Montreal, Quebec.

There is also a Horsecrans fan club. If you want further information on this, write to Robert Boos, 700 N. Nansemond St., Richmond, VA 23221.

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compiled by J. Grant Thiessen

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- (c) AGENT OF VEGA

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- (a) Gnome Press, 1960
- (b) Permabooks, #4242, 1962
- (c) Mayflower, 10043, 1964
- (d) Tempo, 5403, 1973

## Linked collection:

Agent of Vega  
The Truth about Cushser  
The Illusionists  
The Second Night of Summer

Lloyd Currey indicates that there are two bindings, priority as listed: (a) light blue boards, spine lettered in gold; (b) gray cloth, spine lettered in red

# AGENT OF VEGA

BY JAMES H. SCHMITZ

THE FANTASTIC STORY,  
SET CENTURIES IN THE  
FUTURE, OF A GALACTIC  
WAR FOR CONTROL  
OF THE UNIVERSE



espionage and intrigue  
on a galactic scale thousands  
of years in the future

## agent of vega

james h. schmitz



## The Altruist

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- (b) Galaxy (British) #2 (February 1953)

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- (b) Galaxy (British) #9 (November 1953)
- (c) THE SECOND GALAXY READER of SF, ed. H. L. Gold (Crown, 1954)
- (d) retitled GALAXY SF OMNIBUS, ed. H. L. Gold (Grayson & Grayson, 1956)

## Child of the Gods

- (a) Analog March 1972

## Clean Slate

- (a) Amazing September 1964
- (b) Great Science Fiction #12, Fall 1968

## Company Planet

- (a) Analog May 1971
- (b) THE TELZEY TOY

## Compulsion

- (a) Analog June 1970
- (b) THE TELZEY TOY

## The Custodians

- (a) Analog December 1968

## THE DEMON BREED

- (a) Ace, M-105, 1968
- (b) Science Fiction Book Club, 1969 (Code 24 K on page 187)
- (c) Macdonald, 1969
- (d) Ace, 14244, 1979

Novel, serialized in Analog September & October 1968 as "The Tuvela"

## The End of the Line

- (a) Astounding July 1951
- (b) SPACE PIONEERS, ed. Andre Norton (World, 1954)
- (c) TO THE STARS, ed. Robert Silverberg (Hawthorn, 1971)
- (d) TOMORROW 1, ed. Robert Hoskins (Sisnet, T4663, 1971)

## THE ETERNAL FRONTIERS

- (a) Putnam, 1973
- (b) Berkley, 02458, 1973

## Faddist

- (a) Bizarre Mystery Magazine January 1966

## Glory Day

- (a) Analog June 1971

## Goblin Night

- (a) Analog April 1965
- (b) ON OUR WAY TO THE FUTURE, ed. Terry Carr (Ace, 82940, 1970)

## Gone Fishing

- (a) Analog May 1961
- (b) FIVE-OED, ed. Groff Conklin (Pyramid, R-1058, 1964) & (Pyramid, T2450, 1971)
- (c) (FIVE-OED) retitled POSSIBLE TOMORROWS, ed. Groff Conklin (Coronet, 1971) & (Coronet, 17847, 1973)

## Grandpa

- (a) Astounding February 1955
- (b) PENGUIN SCIENCE FICTION, ed. Brian Aldiss (Penguin, 1638, 1961)
- (c) TIME PROBE, ed. Arthur C. Clarke (Delacorte Press, 1966) & (Dell, 8925, 1967)
- (d) SPECTRUM 5, ed. Kingsley Amis & Robert Conquest (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967) & (Berkley, 81595, 1967) & (Pan)
- (e) SCIENCE FICTION BESTIARY (Thomas Nelson, 1971) & (Dell, )
- (f) THE ASTOUNDING-ANALOG READER, VOLUME TWO, ed. Harry Harrison & Brian W. Aldiss (Doubleday, 1973)
- (g) DECADE THE 1950'S, ed. Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison (Macmillan, 1976) & (Pan, 1977)

## Greenface

- (a) Unknown Worlds August 1943
- (b) THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO AND OTHER IMPROBABLE STORIES, ed. Ray Bradbury (Bantam, A1519, 1956)
- (c) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

## Har Sandwich

- (a) Analog June 1963

## Harvest Time

- (a) Astounding September 1958

## The Illusionists

- (see Space Fear)

## An Incident on Route 12

- (a) Worlds of If January 1962
- (b) The Best Science Fiction from If, 1964

## Introduction

- (a) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

## Just Curious

- (a) Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine December 1968
- (b) SF: AUTHORS' CHOICE 2, ed. Harry Harrison (Berkeley, 1983, 1970)

## Left Hand, Right Hand

- (a) Amazing November 1962
- (b) Great Science Fiction #9, Winter 1963

## LEGACY

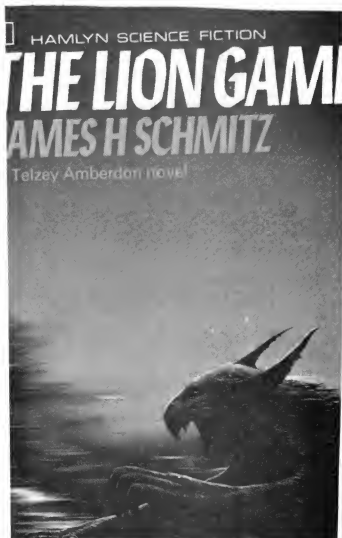
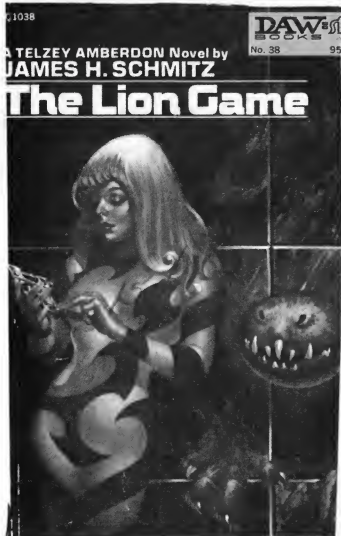
- (a) Ace, 1979  
Retitlings of A TALE OF TWO CLOCKS

## The Lion Game

- (a) Analog August & September 1971
- (b) THE LION GAME

## THE LION GAME

- (a) DAW Books, UQ1038 (#38), 1973
- (b) Sidswick & Jackson, 1976
- (c) Hamlyn, 35544, 1979  
novel, serialized in Analog  
August & September 1971



## Lion Loose...

- (a) Analog October 1961
- (b) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

## The Machmen

- (a) Analog September 1964
- (b) A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUB

## A Nice Day for Screaming

- (a) Analog January 1965
- (b) A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUB

## A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUB

- (a) Chilton, 1965

Collection, consisting of:  
 A Nice Day for Screaming  
 The Winds of Time  
 The Other Likeness  
 The Tangled Web  
 The Machmen  
 Balanced Ecology



## Novice

- (a) Analog June 1962
- (b) THE UNIVERSE AGAINST HER
- (c) ANALOG 2, ed. John W. Campbell, Jr. (Doubleday, 1964) & (Paperback Library, 52-509, 1965) & (Paperback Library, 44-667, 1971)
- (d) TOMORROW'S CHILDREN, ed. Isaac Asimov (Doubleday, 1966)
- (e) MIND TO MIND, ed. Robert Silverberg (Thomas Nelson, 1971) & (Dell, 5652, 1974)

## One Step Ahead

- (a) Worlds of If April 1974

## Oneness

- (a) Analog May 1963

## The Other Likeness

- (a) Analog July 1962
- (b) A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING AND

## OTHER TALES OF THE HUB

## Planet of Forgettings

- (a) Galaxy February 1965
- (b) WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: 1966, ed. Donald A. Wollheim & Terry Carr (Ace, H-15, 1966)
- (c) (WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: 1966) retitled WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: SECOND SERIES (Ace, 91354, 1970)

## Poltergeist

- (a) Analog July 1971

## The Pork Chop Tree

- (a) Analog February 1965
- (b) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

## A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

- (a) Macmillan, 1970
- (b) Collier, 02486, 1973

Collection, consists of:

Introduction  
Lion Loose...  
The Searcher  
The Winds of Time  
The Pork Chop Tree  
Greenface

## Research Alpha (with A. E. van Vost)

- (a) Worlds of If July 1965
- (b) MORE THAN SUPERHUMAN, by A. E. van Vost (Dell, 5815, 1971)

## Resident Witch

- (a) Analog May 1970
- (b) THIS SIDE OF INFINITY, ed. Terry Carr (Ace, 80699, 1972)
- (c) THE TELZEY TOY

5 superb science  
fiction stories

# A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

The fate of the human race hangs in the balance as men match wits with malevolent monsters of the future



## Rosue Psi

- (a) Amazing August 1962
- (b) Strange Fantasy #12, Summer 1970
- (c) THE BEST FROM AMAZING, ed. Ted White (Manor, 95-225, 1973)

## The Searcher

- (a) Analog February 1966
- (b) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

## The Second Night of Summer

- (a) Galaxy December 1950
- (b) POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION, ed. Groff Conklin (Vanguard Press, 1951) (hardcover edition only)
- (c) AGENT OF VEGA

## Sleep No More

- (a) Analog August 1965

## Sour Note on Palysata

- (a) Astounding November 1953

## Space Fear

- (a) Astounding March 1951
- (b) Astounding (British edition) July 1952
- (c) AGENT OF VEGA (as The Illusionists)

## Spacemaster

- (a) NEW WRITINGS IN SF 3, ed. John Carnell (Dobson, 1965)
- (b) NEW WRITINGS IN SF 3, ed. John Carnell (Corgi, 1965)
- (c) NEW WRITINGS IN SF 3, ED. John Carnell (Bantam, F3380, 1967)

## The Star Hyacinths

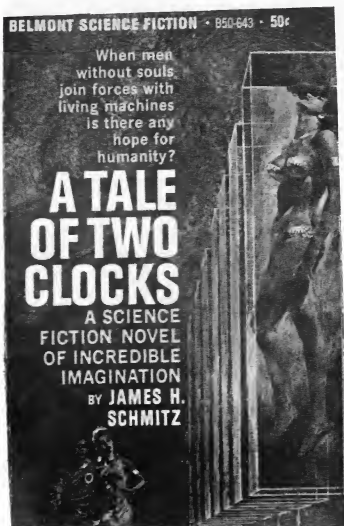
- (a) Amazing December 1961
- (b) A NICE RAY FOR SCREAMING AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUB (as The Tangled Web)

## Summer Guests

- (a) Worlds of If September 1959

## The Symbiotes

- (a) Analog September 1972



## A TALE OF TWO CLOCKS

- (a) Science Fiction Book Club 1962
  - (b) Bodd, Mead, 1962
  - (c) Belmont, B50-643, 1965
  - (d) title changed to LEGACY
- Note: the book club edition and the Bodd, Mead edition are identical in all respects except for the dust jacket--the only differences in the jackets being the words "BOOK CLUB EDITION" on one and a price rubber-stamped on the other, with the lower right corner clipped. Both have the publishers' code "B6" on page 206, and came from the same press run. A second book club printing has the code "B3" on page 206.

## The Tangled Web

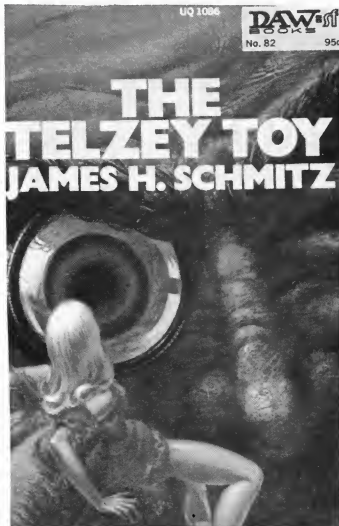
- (see The Star Hyacinths)

## The Telzey Toy

- (a) Analog January 1971
- (b) THE TELZEY TOY

## THE TELZEY TOY

- (a) DAW Books, U01086 (#82), 1973
- (b) Sidswick & Jackson, 1976



Collection, consists of:  
 The Talcrow Toy  
 Resident Witch  
 Compulsion  
 Company Planet

#### These Are the Arts

(a) F&SF September 1962

(b) 14 GREAT TALES OF ESP, ed.

Idella Purnell Stone (Gold Medal, T2164, 1969)

#### The Ties of Earth

(a) Galaxy November 1955 & January 1956

#### Trouble Tide

(a) Analog May 1965

(b) ELSEWHERE AND ELSEWHEN, ed.

Groff Conklin (Berkley, S1561, 1968)

#### The Truth about Cushgar

(a) Astounding November 1950

(b) AGENT OF VEGA

#### The Tuvela

(a) Analog September & October 1968

(b) retitled THE DEMON BREED



#### Undercurrents

(a) Analog May & June 1964

(b) THE UNIVERSE AGAINST HER

#### THE UNIVERSE AGAINST HER

(a) Ace, F-314, 1964

(b) Ace, 84575, 1979 (erroneously states "First Ace printings")

Novel welded together from:

Novice

Undercurrents

#### The Vampire

(a) Science Fiction Plus December 1953

#### Watch the Sky

(a) Analog August 1962

#### We Don't Want Any Trouble

(a) Galaxy June 1953

(b) ASSIGNMENT IN TOMORROW, ed.

Frederick Pohl (Harcourt House, 1954) & (Science Fiction Book Club) & (Lancer, 78699, 1972)

(c) 50 SHORT SCIENCE FICTION TALES, ed. Isaac Asimov & Groff Conklin (Collier, AS516, 1963) & (Collier, 01639, 1966)

#### Where the Time Went

(a) Worlds of If November 1968

(b) ANDROIDS, TIME MACHINES, AND BLUE GIRAFFES, ed. Roger Elwood & Vic Gidalia (Follett, 1973)

#### The Winds of Time

(a) Analog July 1962

(b) A NICE DAY FOR SCREAMING AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUB

(c) A PRIDE OF MONSTERS

#### The Witches of Karres

(a) Astounding December 1949

(b) Astounding (British edition) May 1950

(c) THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY, ed. John W. Campbell (Simon & Schuster, 1952)

(d) THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY, ed. John W. Campbell (Science Fiction Book Club)

(e) retitled THE FIRST ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY, ed. John W. Campbell (Grayson & Grayson, 1964)

(f) as SECOND ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY, ed. John W. Campbell (Four Seasons, 1965)

(g) THE WITCHES OF KARRES

(h) TOWARD INFINITY, ed. Damon Knight (Simon & Schuster, 1968)

(i) THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME, VOLUME IIB, ed. Ben Boya (Doubleday, 1973) & (Avon, 19729, 1974)

## THE WITCHES OF KARRES

- (a) Chilton, 1966
- (b) Chilton, 1967 (2nd)
- (c) Chilton, 1968 (3rd)
- (d) Ace, A-13, 1968
- (e) Ace, 89851
- (f) Ace, 89852, 1977

Novel, incorporating the short story 'The Witches of Karres', as the opening portion.

Would You?

- (a) Fantastic December 1969



THE SCIENCE-FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA, ed.  
Peter Nicholls, Doubleday, 672 pp,  
\$24.95 (12.95 paper)

It is ironic, that when it was possible to do a totally definitive encyclopedia of science-fiction (back say in the mid 1950's), that little or nothing was ever done about it. I maintain that today, the field is expanding so fast in all directions, that it is nothing short of impossible to publish a book of this nature in one volume. However, this new release by British sf fan Peter Nicholls is the closest anyone has come yet to producing this mythical creature. Even here though, there are unexplained omissions such as recent writers Robert Asprin and Orson Scott Card. Admittedly, critics differ in their interpretations of their value to the sf field, but it is much too early to discard them. I feel that perhaps the only reason they were not mentioned was because they are both American and perhaps their works (like *THIEVES' WORLD* & *HOT SLEEP* for example) are still limited to publication in North America, and have not reached Britain as yet.

This book differs from the standard coffee table volume which attempts to interlace factual comment with entertaining commentary. Of course, to a dyed-in-the-wool fan any sf facts are entertainment. And, it is true, this book does have a fair number of black and white illustrations to set off the various entries. There is an excellent checklist of sf themes, ranging from Absurdist sf to Women, and the authors range from Vance Aandahl to Jerzy Zulawski (1874-1915).

One thing this will be a help in establishing, is the real identities of many sf authors who use pseudonyms. I have never quite been able to understand the penchant of authors who do so. I can see why it may have been necessary in the early days when a pulp writer tried to sell as many stories to as many magazines as possible, and the only way to do so was to use one or several pseudonyms. This surely is no longer necessary today, once a writer has become established. I know that in my own case, I am egotistical enough to want to see my own name on everything I

write, unless it is something I am ashamed of (in which case I wouldn't bother writing it in the first place).

Some entries tend to be somewhat superficial, but this is because there is a lack of information about a writer or a book who no longer exist. Basically, the subject matter could be divided into five areas: Writers; Motion Pictures, Television, Comics, Games and General Popular Culture; SF Themes; Fandom; and Real Life Discoveries. Any discussion of individual books takes place under one or another of these categories, and not be separate listings as such.

There are lots of surprises one does not expect. I was surprised to find that Ray Bradbury is only 60 years old; I thought he was 8 or 9 years older. Where on earth (or in space) Mr. Nicholls was able to collect all this data is a mystery to me, but he has done an incredible job in assembling it for publication here.

Like all good sf itself, this book is a voyage of discovery, and everytime you pick it up and look into it, you will find a new fact or revelation. Such as the British TV series 1990 which was produced between 1977 and 1978 and dealt with a nightmarish utopian future for the British Isles.

If there were any errors other than errors of omission, I was unable to discover any. And that is no small accomplishment, knowing how nit-picking we sf fans are when it comes to our favorite subject. I would hope that in the future, editors will let this book stand as the most complete to date, and instead, try to concentrate their efforts in the direction of more specialization on themes, such as time travel, robots, etc.

It would be redundant for me to repeat the tired old cliché that reviewers always used to close a review when they cannot think of any more to say. But in this case it is perfectly

applicable, so I will do so: "This is an excellent well-documented book and it belongs on every reader's bookshelf and in every library". Don't miss it or you will regret it.

--W. Ritchie Benedict

\*\*\*\*\*

THE MONITOR, THE MINERS AND THE SHREE, Lee Killough, Ballantine: 28456, April 1980, 215 pp, \$1.95

On the whole this book is fun to read, but it lacks sufficient development to satisfy. The problem stems from Lee Killough's selection of a straightforward and lacklustre plot which she develops predictably.

The story revolves around protagonists Chemel Krar's efforts to reunite her study team after an attempt on their lives scatters the members across the face of the planet Nira. Chemel's training requires her to avoid any contact with the native Shree which could influence their cultural development. But she soon discovers that that is impossible.

Here Chemel's characterization shows some incongruity, as she constantly struggles with her conscience over the action she takes to perform her duty. One would expect more decisiveness from Chemel considering she has had years of training for this assignment.

On the other hand, the Shree are presented very well. Their society is believable; the characterization of individuals appealing.

Readers searching for a light read that won't tax their intellectual faculties will enjoy this book; otherwise pass this one by and save your money for something more stimulating.

--Allan Magnus

## THE STORY OF THE PHANTOM

by Melville C. Hill (Bunker)

As a boy Lee Falk read all the early classics which have thrilled millions of readers from all over the world, including this writer. Falk read the Tarn series, Kipling's jungle books, all about the knights of the round table - Roland, Sir Lancelot, Gawain, plus all the Gods and mythical heroes of ancient times, Perseus, Thor, Ulysses, Hercules, etc.

Eventually as a student at the University of Illinois and having read an enormous amount of literature prior to arriving at college, he had been toying with the idea of creating a character that would be a hero patterned after a composite of the many great men, both historical and mythical, that he had read about during the past ten years.

He had also read Arthur Conan Doyle, Arsene Lupin, Edgar Allan Poe, and all the other great writers of mysteries, but he was most profoundly intrigued by the great magicians of the twenties and thirties, Cardini, Thurston, Blackstone, etc. Logically, Falk's first character was a composite of all the detectives, magicians that he had read about which he named MANDRAKE. Falk teamed up with free lance artist Phil Davis in 1934 and MANDRAKE became an overnight success in comic strip form under King Features Syndicate and later was highlighted in his own comic book series. The series was never picked by any paperback publishing house but did appear in a digest size paper format under the Nostalgia House imprint.

Having an inventive mind his next character evolved as a masked hero stemming from Robin Hood, the early crusades, knights errant, and all the Gods of antiquity, which he named THE PHANTOM. Teaming up with artist William McCoy, the strip was again accepted by King Features Syndicate and they were on their way to another success. THE PHANTOM never did make it into paperback book form during the early years and never appeared in pulp magazine form as did the super heroes THE SHADOW, DOC SAVAGE, SECRET AGENT X, G-8, and many of the others, but nevertheless, THE PHANTOM became an established hero and is read by fans all over the world.

Most all the Heroes had made it into paperback form by the 1960's. Berkley Medallion produced G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES plus the SPIDER series. Bantam, Belmont, Tempo, and later Pyramid came out with the SHADOW series. Popular Library contributed the CAPTAIN FUTURE novels. Corinth publications has a host of reprints in DR. DEATH, DUSTY AYRES, OPERATOR 5, PHANTOM DETECTIVE, and SECRET AGENT X. Bantam started issuing DOC SAVAGE in 1964, and was issuing on a fairly regular basis until issue #90 when because of a drop in sales the series was stopped. 10 months later issue #91 appeared, after readers across the nation flooded the publisher's office with mail



demanding its return. I hope that all readers and collectors will keep buying the series so that eventually the entire set will appear in the paperback form. After all, who can afford to pay the prices that they are getting for the original appearances.

Avon has been in business since early 1941 and to date has produced many outstanding series in mystery, science fiction, and other genre.

Avon became convinced that THE PHANTOM would be a popular series in paperback so in September 1972 the #1 issue hit the stands. Before ending in August 1975 he appeared in 15 stirring adventures. If you haven't read them you are missing a great group of stories.

George Wilson was the artist commissioned to do all 15 covers and they are all a delight to behold. Every issue has a prologue by Lee Falk that goes into minute detail explaining THE PHANTOM, his birth and continuing life in the series. Don't miss reading it, and in the department of "I wish I had said that" is a MUST READ preface that was written by Francis Lacassin, lecturer at the Sorbonne in Paris, France - June 1972 - this is the icing on the cake.

The following is a complete listing on all titles:

- |     |       |       |       |   |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|---|
| # 1 | V2460 | 9-72  | (.75) | The Phantom<br>(Original Lee Falk story)                        |
| # 2 | V2470 | 11-72 | (.75) | The Slave Market of Mucar<br>(Adapted by Basil Copper)          |
| # 3 | V2481 | 12-72 | (.75) | The Scorpio Menace<br>(Adapted by Basil Copper)                 |
| # 4 | 14498 | 3-73  | (.75) | The Veiled Lady<br>(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn) (Note 1)         |
| # 5 | 14894 | 5-73  | (.75) | The Golden Circle<br>(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn) (Note 2)       |
| # 6 | 15545 | 7-73  | (.75) | The Mysterious Ambassador<br>(Original Lee Falk story)          |
| # 7 | 15867 | 8-73  | (.75) | The Mystery of the Sea Horse<br>(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn)     |
| # 8 | 17061 | 10-73 | (.75) | The Hydra Monster<br>(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn)                |
| # 9 | 17731 | 12-73 | (.95) | Killer's Town<br>(Original Lee Falk story)                      |
| #10 | 18184 | 2-74  | (.95) | The Goggle-eyed Pirates<br>(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn) (Note 3) |



- #11 18820 4-74 (.95) The Swamp Rats  
(Adapted by Frank S. Shawn)
- #12 19406 6-74 (.95) The Vampires and the Witch  
(Original Lee Falk story)
- #13 23085 2-75 (.95) The Island of Dogs  
(Adapted by Warren Shanahan)
- #14 23283 4-75 (.95) The Assassins  
(Adapted by Carson Bingham)
- #15 24729 7-75 (.95) The Curse of the Two Headed Bull  
(Original Lee Falk story)

Note 1: Frank S. Shawn is a pseudonym for Ron Goulart.

Note 2: Author's name is given on this book as Frank S. Shaw. It should be Frank S. Shawn.

Note 3: Goulart wrote this as Frank S. Shawn, but his name was left off the book.



## MYSTERIES FOR CHILDREN

by Amy Lubelski

In the early days, lack of characterization in the mystery story was due to the restrictions placed on the genre itself and not to any particular lack of expertise on the part of the writers. The genre developed in the Victorian period, so that for a long time these stories were considered not "nice", not at all "literature", and many authors were unsure of their audience. Some felt that readers looked to mysteries to be titillated, to be lifted out of the drab reality of daily life. For others, it was ratiocination, the name Poe gave to the method of inductive and deductive reasoning, that was the *raison d'être* of detective fiction. This did not change even with Sherlock Holmes, to whom, although he was the greatest fictional detective of all time, reasoning was fundamental and immutable. He even chides Watson at one point for making the little stories too personal, as this would obscure the reason for his success: ratiocination.

The conflict between character and plot only came to the surface with the success of Holmes as a character. In fact, he is more famous than any particular story in which he appears. But prior to Holmes, detectives were merely the vehicles by which the story moved to its climax - the solving of the puzzle. As R. Austin Freeman, author of the Dr. Thorndyke series, wrote, in *THE ART OF THE DETECTIVE STORY*, the mystery was different from other forms of fiction in providing the reader with "primarily an intellectual satisfaction", and insofar as there was characterization at all, it should be "secondary and subordinate to the intellectual interest of the story". However, good writers rarely adhere to the rules set down for them so that now there are many fictional detectives far more real to us than their stories, or in some cases, their authors.

The detective or mystery story written especially for children has suffered from much the same growing pains as the adult stories. The most famous author, by far, is Franklin W. Dixon, creator of Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys and the Dana Girls. Dixon, who was followed upon by his daughter, Harriet Adams, strictly adhered to Williard Huntington Wright's (S. S. van Dine) dictum that "the characters in a detective story should merely fulfill the requirements of plausibility, because any deeper delineation would act only as a clog in the narrative machinery". The fact is, we do generally refer to the books as "Nancy Drews" or "Hardy Boys", but this, I think, has more to do with volume than with any remarkable characters. The mystery to be solved is clearly the most important element of each story, but, with only minor variations in details, most of them are interchangeable. The writing is tedious and repetitious and overall the books are rather boring for Nancy and the Brothers Hardy are stock characters. Indeed, Mrs. Adams admits proudly, "I sort of patterned Nancy Drew after what I would think was an ideal girl." Adams has updated the books, but the characters are wood, without life. Strictly within the conventions but only for the youngest readers of mysteries.

It is possible to write exciting stories for children with well-defined, attractive characters. BILL BERSON, *MASTER DETECTIVE* by Astrid Lundgren (perhaps better known as the author of the Pippi Longstocking series) is such a one. Here the author combines hearty characterization with careful attention to detail at no expense to the plot. Thirteen year old Bill desperately wants to be a detective in the mode of Sherlock Holmes. He proves himself a worthy heir. With the help of his two friends, and using logical deduction and a painstaking attention to detail, he solves the mystery of Uncle Einar. There is no subplot to distract the child reader and the writing is superb. With none of the eccentricity of adult heroes such as Poirot or Holmes, yet Bill Bergson is as fully developed, interesting and engaging as they. And the reader never loses sight of the fact that detection is what

THE TANELORN ARCHIVES by Richard Bilyeu.

A comprehensive, exhaustive bibliography (there are over 1200 entries) of every edition of all material by Michael Moorcock is the aim of this bibliographic work. Included are books, stories, fanzines, posters, records, manuscripts, comics, etc. Cover is by Steve Leialoha. There will be three variations--a signed, numbered, 250-copy edition in hardcover at \$20.00, an unsigned, 350-copy edition at \$15.00, and a trade paperback edition at \$7.95. Publication December 1, 1980.

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this story is all about.

In the same tradition of full characterization and good writing are two books translated from the German of Henry Winterfield, *DETECTIVES IN TOGAS* and *THE MYSTERY OF THE ROMAN RANSOM*. These are complex stories since in both the action takes place in a generally accurately drawn ancient Rome. The main characters are seven mischievous schoolboys, but the real hero is their crusty teacher, Xanthos. Winterfield's writing and sense of humor bring a long ago period of time to life. Neither the characters of the boys, each slightly different, nor the cool and amusing logic of Xanthos, who actually solves the puzzle, detracts in any way from the object of the story. Passages such as the following belie Wright's injunction against delineation of character:

"The boys had given Xanthos the nickname of Xantippus because he reminded them so much of Xantippe, the wife of the world-renowned Greek philosopher Socrates, who is said to have soured her husband's life with her ceaseless nagging. Xantippus soured his pupils' lives. He was a crabby, hard taskmaster, and he was rarely satisfied."

And there are others, that combine characters full of vigor and life with excellent plotting. Our modern view of the mystery story would not tolerate characters being only "plausibly" real, for as we have shown, this in no way detracts from the child reader's enjoyment of a baffling and first-rate mystery.

Shortly before typing up the preceding article, I had occasion to read *GHOST OF THE HARDY BOYS*, by Leslie McFarlane. In it, he revealed the following information about these

sluths. Franklin W. Dixon was a house pseudonym created by Edward Stratemeyer. The Mrs. Adams mentioned in the article above was his daughter. Among some of Stratemeyer's house-held names were: Roy Rockwood, Victor Appleton, Nat Ridley, Arthur M. Winfield, Clarence Young, Carolyn Keene, Franklin W. Dixon, Allen Chapman, James Cody Ferris, Laura Lee Hope, E. Ward Strayer, Jim Bowie, Ned St. Myer, Dr. Willard Mackenzie, May Hollis Barton, Amy Bell Marlow, Lester Chadwick, Victor Appleton II, etc. He also personally used the pseudonyms Jim Bowie, Nat Woods, and Julia Edwards, as well as writing 11 novels released as by Horatio Alger, after the death of that author, based on Alger's outlines.

Other pseudonym information mentioned in the book: Frank Richards (author of *Billy Bunter*) was also Martin Clifford; Frederick Van Rensselaer Dey wrote 17 years worth of the *Nick Carter* dime novels; Gilbert Patten wrote the *Frank Merriwell* books as Burt L. Standish, although Street & Smith used this names as a house-name, since Leslie McFarlane mentions having had it put on one of his stories when he had two stories in the same issue of a magazine; Upton Sinclair wrote as Ensign Clark Fitch, *USN*.

Leslie McFarlane wrote about 20 of the *Hardy Boys* mysteries, ending with *THE PHANTOM FREIGHTER*. He also wrote the first four *Dana Girls* mysteries.

It is interesting to note that a reporter interviewing McFarlane, comments on the re-writes and updates of the books:

"I've compared all my original copies, the ones I read when I was a kid, with all the new ones. They haven't just been streamlined. They've been gutted from beginning to end. Those old books were well written. They had words you could roll around in your mouth and taste. They had funny scenes. They had

scenes you could wallow in. These new ones move faster, all right, but too fast. There's never a place to stop and linger. That's why the old ones were so great for a kid. They had flavor. And now the flavor is gone....The old books were written for a literate generation. But not these new ones."

The Stratemeyer Syndicate has the right to do this, however, as they bought all rights whatsoever at the time of writing of the book, for anywhere from \$100 to an unspecified amount not much over \$160. Edward Stratemeyer and later his daughter, would prepare chapter by chapter outlines, from which the books would be written by ghost writers, for the most part, although Mrs. Adams did write many of the Nancy Drew books herself.

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#### TIPS ON BREAKING INTO THE PRO RANKS

by

Ralph Roberts, Member: SFWA

One of the more exciting aspects of the science fiction field to me is the universal amount of participation by its fans (or fen). Practically every person I know who's into sf or fantasy wants to write the stuff as well. That's good! You don't find that degree of commitment in other genres. Certainly not in mysteries, western, or romance -- not even in porn (tho' I understand a lot of other activity takes place). Little old ladies who buy Harlequins off the supermarket shelves harbor no secret dreams of writing same. Science fiction readers do.

And, like so many others, I too was, am, and will probably always be susceptible to this dream of publication. Like every other

science fiction writer before me, I've read works that caused me to utter those fateful words, "I can do this BETTER!" No doubt the second caveman, on seeing the first caveman's scrapings on stone tablets, grunted a sneering monosyllabic equivalent of that same phrase. Well, I have been lucky enough to break into stone... er... print. You can, too.

To boost my credibility (and, you may correctly assume, ego), I feel qualified to give tips on becoming a 'pro' because I'm in the process of doing IT. All right! In less than two years of trying, I've managed to sell twenty sf stories, one fantasy story, and twenty-eight articles to magazines in four countries. And I qualified and am now a proud member of Science Fiction Writers of America. So my dream is coming true. Again I say, yours can too.

I, in my quest for publication, have learned several things the hard way. If you want to be published, submit. Send it in. Editors reject pieces of paper, not you. They'll look at your next epic when it floats in through the old mailslot, maybe even buy it. But YOU GOTTA send it in. And so what if you're writing pure trash, utter drivel? You obviously need the practice. We all do. And most of us write many, many stories before that magical first sale. That, then, is one secret to getting published; write a lot and send it in. And in. And in. (Just checked my files, I recently sold a story that received ten rejections from other magazines -- perserverance pays quite well, thank you.)

Another thing that helps a beginning writer is to get published in a major magazine ("Oh, great," you moan derisively. "Tell

us something we don't know."). Well, I'm serious. It adds credibility to your writing and story sales pick up dramatically (I make it a definite point to casually mention my sales to IASFM in cover letters to editors). Also, the boost to your inspiration and desire to work is of immeasurable value.

Now. Just where the heck can a newcomer stand a chance of getting published in a major, respectable (yea, even prestigious) science fiction magazine and have it respected EVEN outside the sf field. Answer: ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. They encourage us newcomers. They want to see manuscripts from unknown, neophyte writers. They'll give prompt reading, occasional pertinent criticism, and even encouragement. Best of all, they will BUY froooooooooom YOU "

Like many other writers who got their start in the pages of IASFM, I feel that George Scithers, the Hugo-winning editor, is our generation's equivalent to the revered John Campbell of times past. George actively seeks new talent, buys their stories, and (by golly) publishes same. Which is not saying you don't have to be good (you sure as heck DO!), but you can sell to him. IASFM, in my opinion, is the best route to your first BIG sale. After that, you have a proven track record and the other mags will look closer at your work. If you're interested in submitting to IASFM, send a SASE first to:

Mr. George H. Scithers,  
Editor  
ISAAC ASIMOV'S Science  
Fiction Magazine  
Box 13116  
Philadelphia, Pa 19101

and ask for the free information on story needs and manuscript format (they prefer a 9 1/2" or No. 10 envelope so everything will fit).

That's about all for now. I wish those of you who want to write (and you gotta want it to get anywhere), all the best. That's another nice thing about sf, all the big name 'pros' I talk to at cons encourage new writers. They enjoy 'talking shop'. Give 'er a try. And, write on!

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THE FACE OF THE DEEP, Jim Young,  
Pocket Books: 82930, December  
1979, 223pp, \$1.95

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On the surface, Jim Young's first novel is a tale documenting Rafe O'Sullivan's efforts to be rescued, after an attack on the expedition which he was a part of leaves him and another member stranded on the planet Bok II. This story has everything. Alien lifeforms, friendly and hostile natives, the inevitable chase, the eventual rescue: all rolled together into an entertaining, action packed adventure.

But this is just a veneer covering the actual purpose of the book--the introduction of the Explorers. Young's development of the Explorers remind one of the Pak Protectors found in Larry Niven's Known Space series or the Heechee in the works of Frederik Pohl. For example, all three races have been dead for thousands of years with the reasons behind their disappearance unknown. Also their civilizations were so technologically advanced that any remaining artifacts are often surrounded in mystery.



Found on Bok II is an ancient Explorer artifact known as the Citadel, treated as a religious shrine by the inhabitants. Young supplies a subtle hint regarding the Citadel's real purpose early in the book, then refrains from providing additional clues until just before the end. At this point, he also leaves a teaser behind concerning the Explorer's disappearance.

Thus it appears that Jim Young is trying to construct a foundation on which to write further episodes. Expect a sequel to THE FACE OF THE DEEP sometime in the future.

--Allan Magnus

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THE PATCHWORK GIRL, Larry Niven,  
Ace: 65315, April 1980, 206 pp,  
\$5.95

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THE PATCHWORK GIRL is Larry Niven's most recent novel in his Known Space series. Though not one of Niven's best, it does display a return to his more usual vigor, which was noticeably absent in his last few offerings; most notably THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS and THE MAGIC GOES AWAY. It features A.R.M. inspector Gil Hamilton in another murder investigation. This time he's on the Moon hunting for the murderer of a dignitary from the Asteroids.

Like all mysteries, it starts with the basics. There is the

usual missing weapon and the prime suspect with both motive and opportunity. The suspense remains taut as new clues direct the suspicion from one individual to the next. If the reader pays close attention, there is one person who is conspicuously missing from Gil's suspect list. He/she (no clues here) turns out to be the true felon.

The story's most entertaining aspect is provided by Niven's use of water, a simple everyday substance, as the crux of the whole story. As a liquid it's employed for a misleading clue; as a solid it forms the crucial part of an ingenuous murder scheme; and as a gas it supplies the decisive piece to the puzzle.

Mystery addicts should find this book a refreshing change. Niven fans will be encouraged by his return to life.

--Allan Magnus

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#### LETTER FROM MICHAEL HOUGHTON

I didn't find this biblio (Avram Davidson) as thorough-going as previous ones as even my collection contains four unmentioned stories (ED--Mic was unable to supply exact dates; I have taken the following information from John Nieminski's excellent THE SAINT MAGAZINE INDEX, which I should have done in the first place):

Captain Pasharooney (Saint 5/67)

Dealer in Fear (Saint 9/59)

Filial Son (Saint 11/58)

The Man Who Found the Body (Saint 6/60)

Never Forget a Face (Saint 10/67)

Prince's Mixture (Saint 9/61)

The Sensitive (Saint 12/63)

The Silence of Steve Spangas (Saint 9/62)

To Avoid Conviction (Saint 9/67)



Further notes on AD biblio:

O BRAVE NEW WORLD should be  
BRAVE OLD WORLD

THE TENANTS: collectors may wish to know that the two versions in 'Shock' and 'F&SF' are very different - the same story, but almost every word rewritten.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM was in EQMM Aug 1975 not 1974

OR ALL THE SEAS WITH OYSTERS: there was no UK paperback reprint as such since Thorpe and Porter simply imported the original USA edition and put their usual blue price stickers on them.

#### LETTER FROM E. T. CALDWELL

Perhaps a notion -- if someone -- or several of your readers could compile a list of 'related' works; i.e. Holmesian, Lovecraftian, Tarzan-like (I got the notion from Darrell C. Richardson's ad describing ERB material), Lost Horizon type, Mundyian books, pbs, magazine appearances. A great service to collectors and potential collectors, and would serve to stimulate the circulation of such works.

#### PHOTO CREDITS

My apologies are due to Joseph Lewandowski. As well as providing the photographs of pulps which illustrate this issue's articles on The Skipper, Doc Savage and Dr. Yen Sin, he also provided the margin decorations on the John Nanovic interview in MEG 9.

The photo of myself and David Badke (a book collector from Calgary, Alberta) was taken by Georges Giguere, a prominent Edmonton, Alberta fan, and publisher of the fanzine, COMPOUND FRACTURE. (Photo was in MEG 11)

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JOHN VARLEY

compiled by Fred Isajenko

#### KEY

AR - Air Raid Stories  
B - Anna-Louise Bach stories  
EW - Eight Worlds future history  
GAEA - stories placed inside the structure orbiting Titan

Air Raid (AR)

(a) Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine Spring 1977 (as Herb Boehm)  
(b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Runner-up short story, Hugo Awards; #3 short story, Locus Poll

Basatelle (B)

(a) Galaxy October 1976  
(b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

The Barbie Murders (B)

(a) Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine January 1978  
(b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

Winner, novelet, Locus Poll

THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

(a) Berkley, 1980

Collection, consisting of:  
Picnic on Nearside  
Manikins  
Basatelle  
The Funhouse Effect  
Equinoctial  
Good-Bye Robinson Crusoe  
The Barbie Murders  
Lollipop and the Tar Baby  
Beatnik Bayou

Beatnik Bayou (EW)

(a) NEW VOICES 3, ed. George R. R. Martin (pb, 1980)

Equinoctial (EW)

(a) ASCENTS OF WONDER, ed. David Gerrold (pb, 1977)  
(b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

The Funhouse Effect (EW)

(a) F&SF December 1976  
(b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

GAS GIANT

Unpublished novel (1973)

Good-Bye Robinson Crusoe (EW)

(a) Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine Spring 1977  
(b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

## Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance (EW)

- (a) Galaxy July 1976
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

## In the Bowl (EW)

- (a) F&SF December 1975
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Runner-up novelet, Nebula Awards

## In the Hall of the Martian Kings

- (a) F&SF February 1977
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Runner-up novella, Hugo Awards

## Interview with John Varley

- (a) SF Review August 1977

## Interview: John Varley

- (a) Future Life September 1979

## Lollipop and the Tar Baby (EW)

- (a) ORBIT 19, ed. Damon Knight  
(Berkley Putnam, 1978) & (SF Book Club,  
1978)

## The M&amp;M, Seen as a Low-Yield Thermonuclear Device

- (a) ORBIT 18, ed. Damon Knight  
(Berkley Putnam, 1977)

## Manikins

- (a) Amazing January 1976
- (b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER  
STORIES

1955

- (a) SFWA Bulletin (1980)

## THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE (EW)

- (a) Dial Press, 1977
- (b) SF Book Club, 1977
- (c) Dell, 1978

## Options (EW)

- (a) UNIVERSE 9, ed. Terry Carr  
(Doubleday, 1979)

Runner-up, novelet, Nebula Awards

## Overdrawn at the Memory Bank (EW)

- (a) Galaxy May 1976
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

## The Persistence of Vision

- (a) F&SF March 1978
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

Winner, novella, Hugo Award,  
Nebula Award, Locus Poll

## THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

- (a) Dial Press, 1978
- (b) SF Book Club, 1978
- (c) Dell, 1979

Collection, consisting of:

- Retrograde Summer
- When the Black Hole Passes
- In the Bowl
- The Phantom of Kansas
- Overdrawn at the Memory Bank
- Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance
- Air Raid
- In the Hall of the Martian Kings
- The Persistence of Vision

## The Phantom of Kansas (EW)

- (a) Galaxy February 1976
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

## Picnic on Nearside (EW)

- (a) F&SF August 1974
- (b) THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER  
STORIES

## The Psi Olympics

- (a) Scintillation December 1976

## Retrograde Summer (EW)

- (a) F&SF February 1975
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

## Scoreboard

- (a) Vertex August 1974

## TITAN (GAEA)

- (a) Analog January through April 1978
- (b) Dial Press, 1979
- (c) SF Book Club, 1979
- (d) Berkley, 1980

## When the Black Hole Passes (EW)

- (a) F&SF June 1975
- (b) THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

## WIZARD (GAEA)

- (a) Berkley Putnam, 1980

FORTHCOMING

## The Bellman (B)

- (a) THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS, ed.  
Harlan Ellison

## Blue Champagne (B)

- (a) NEW VOICES 4, ed. George R. R.  
Martin

## THE GATE (AR)

- (a) Macmillan  
Movie novelization of Air-Raid

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## JOHN VARLEY - THE EIGHT WORLDS CHRONOLOGY

\* YEAR - 2050 (1 Occupation Earth) \* \* \* \* \* 0-200 O.E. \* \* \* \* \* 200-300 O.E. \* \* \* \* \*

## STORIES - GAS GIANT

## STORIES - OPTIONS

## STORIES - OVERDRAWN AT THE MEMORY BANK

## PICNIC ON NEARSIDE

## IN THE BOWL

## RETROGRADE SUMMER

EVENTS - The Invaders destroy all signs of human technology in order to benefit the three intelligent species on Earth. Sperm whales, "killer" whales and dolphins. Humans, bees, beavers, ants, coral & other housebuilders are not considered intelligent. 10 Billion humans starve to death. 3,000 people survive on moonbase & small Mars base (later abandoned).

EVENTS - Population thinning lotteries.

Begin recolonization of Nearside.

DNA experimentation proscribed.

EVENTS - Discovery of Hotline and resultant technology: Symblots, Partial Gravitational Rigor, Macromolecule Manipulation, Null-fields, Memory Recordings.

Hole hunting beginning.

Colonization of eight worlds begun.

\* \* \* \* \* 300-450 O.E. \* \* \* \* \* 450-600+ O.E. \* \* \* \* \*

## STORIES - THE PHANTOM OF KANSAS

## STORIES - GOODBYE ROBINSON CRUSOE

## GOTTA SING, GOTTA DANCE

## EQUINOCTIAL

## THE FUNHOUSE EFFECT

## BEATNIK BAYOU

## WHEN THE BLACK HOLE PASSES

## OPHIUCHI HOTLINE

## LOLLIPOP AND THE TAR BABY

EVENTS - Increased activity in system.

EVENTS - Pluto struggles for independence from inner world's common market.

First signs of the desire to return Earthside.

Free Earthers organized against invaders. Hotline ultimatum. Posledon leaves system. Contact with Traders.

Rings being painted.

Singularity taken from Invaders. Interstellar migration commences.

Clone control regulations.

## PHANTOM AIRSHIP

## The Truth Behind the Fiction

by Dafydd Neal Dyar

One of the most rewarding (when it works) and frustrating (when it doesn't) pastimes in pulp research is that of identifying the factual model for one's fictional interests. We know, for instance, that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle modeled Sherlock Holmes after his pathology instructor, Doctor Joseph Bell, and that Doyle himself was the pattern for James H. Watson. Similarly, Commander Ian Fleming drew upon his own experience as an operative of British Naval Intelligence in creating the character of Commander James Bond, right down to his preference for shaken-not-stirred martinis and Fire Island shirts. The truth behind the fiction can sometimes be more interesting than the fiction itself, even when it turns out to be less fantastic.

Art imitates life. This is as true of fiction as it is of sculpture, painting, music or poetry. But fiction is often larger than life, making it difficult to find the factual acorn from which the fictional oak has grown. Good fiction, after all, manages to cover its roots pretty well, if only by misdirecting your attention with a profusion of leaves. One is tempted to say that that sometimes you can't see the forest for the trees...

The DOC SAVAGE adventures offer a particular challenge due to their vagueness and lack of detailed description. Dent wrote with the economy of the telegrapher and newsman that he

was, packing as much information in as few words as possible in order to propel the story forward. Unlike Gibson, who wrote as much for mood and atmosphere as for action, Dent scorned minutiae except where absolutely necessary for clarity. Add to this paucity of hard data the fact that Dent was fond of making allusions to common-knowledge current events that have since become obscure trivia, and you end up with a literary crabgrass whose original inspiration is almost completely lost.

Almost ... but not quite!

By way of example, let's take a look at Doc's roadster and trimotored speed plane. Throughout the early stories of the 1930's, both are mentioned and described frequently, yet never with enough detail to readily identify the model. The roadster, first mentioned in LAND OF TERROR (April 1933/Bantam #8), is usually a nondescript grey with a streamlined "boat-tailed" rear end, powered by an aircraft engine so finely tuned that only the jump of the ammeter heralds its ignition. It could travel well over 130 MPH.

And that's all we know: grey, boat-tailed, aircraft engine, silent running, speed.

But that may still be enough for a positive identification ... after a little research in a well-stocked library.

In 1933, there weren't that many boat-tailed roadsters of American design. I specify American design because it is doubtful that Doc Savage, the All-American Man of Bronze, would us a foreign import like the

Bugatti. This was the Great Depression, when all things foreign were suspect. Doc would have no part of anything unAmerican, or by extension nonAmerican.

Taking another tack, Doc's views were also Dent's views, and Dent certainly preferred American manufacture over comparable foreign products. For confirmation of this, check out his opinions (expressed through the views of Ham Brooks) on Senor Steele's foreign-made speed plane in THE FRECKLED SHARK (March 1939/Bantam #67).



In any case, there were only five boat-tailed roadsters built in America in 1933: the Auburn L-30 (later known as the 852

Speedster), the Cord 160-A, the Duesenberg Weymann SJ, the Packard 275 Runabout (Model 1106), and the Stutz DV-32 Bearcat. Of these, three were built by the same company, Auburn, which built the Auburn, the Cord and the Duesenberg ... and Auburn's great claim to fame was that their cars were all powered by the famous Lycoming OV-12A "Liberty" engine used in fighter planes in the Great War! That narrows the field to three.

So which of the three was Doc's? There's no way to tell without more detailed information. My own option is for the Duesenberg, but the choice is purely personal and unscientific. I like the car's looks ... a factor which might actually disqualify it in view of Doc's phobia against attracting attention.

Doc's trimotor is easier to identify, as there were only three planes matching ITS description: the Junkers Ju-52/3m, the Savoia-Marchetti SM-79 and the Stinson Model A. Since the first two are foreign built, the Stinson wins by default. Not only was it built in Detroit, it could be ordered factory-equipped with pontoon floats ... a feature unique to that plane which became a hallmark of Doc's air fleet.

But it is another aircraft which has brought about this article. The aircraft didn't even belong to Doc, although it introduced him to a form of air travel which would later play an important part in the series. What makes this particular aircraft so interesting is that it bridges the gap between fiction and reality in a manner BEYOND mere speculation. It therefore

gives us a place in the series where we can say "This, at least, was REAL." And where one fact has been proven, it is only a matter of time and research before others come to light, validating the entire series.

The fictional aircraft that proved to be real was the "ghost zeppelin" of THE LOST OASIS (September 1933/Bantam #6), the airship AEROMUNDE (ZX 03). It was modeled after the actual lost airship DIXMUDE (LZ 114/L72). As mentioned earlier, the story BEHIND the story proves as strange, if not stranger, than the fiction.

First, we will examine the fiction.

THE LOST OASIS was the seventh Doc Savage story in the original series and the sixth Bantam reprint. It was written by Lester Dent and submitted to Street & Smith on 12 May 1933 for publication in the September issue. It was first reprinted by Bantam Books in April 19965, and all items quoted here are taken from that first Bantam edition.

THE LOST OASIS has the distinction of being the first adventure to involve Doc Savage and his five aides with an airship. As with the submarine HELLDIVER in THE POLAR TREASURE (June 1933/Bantam #4), the airship in question belonged to the villains in the beginning but ended up in Doc's hands by the end. As it turned out, the airship had already changed hands a number of times before the events recorded in THE LOST OASIS.

The story begins in New York with the arrival of the steamship YANKEE BEAUTY, which has created quite a furor by radioing ahead a one million dollar reward to anyone who could locate Doc Savage, who was at the Fortress of Solitude at the time. The radiogram, signed "Imperiled", was sent by three mysterious co-travelers: Lady Nelia Sealing, Jules Fourmalier and a redhaired man known simply as "Red".

These three had fled from somewhere in the Sahara with a packet of uncut diamonds worth well over the offered million. They are pursued by the ghost zeppelin, which was first sighted over Maine, bearing a group of Egyptian cutthroats led by Sol Yuttal and Hadi-Mot, two former slavers turned smugglers. Hadi-Mot is Egyptian and his name, which is actually a nickname, means "quiet death" in Arabic. Yuttal is an American, one of the Sidney Greenstreet type Fat Man villains favored by Dent.

Lady Nelia Sealing is an English aviatrix who disappeared during a London to Cape Town solo attempt four months before the story opens. Dent was fond of puns and word play in the names he gave characters and places. Lady Nelia is a "Yankee Beauty" if ever there was one, and the name "Nelia Sealing" is probably derived from "nihil ceiling" or "ceiling zero", an aeronautical term used to describe low cloud formations.

(Dent later used a similar aviation pun with the villain Cayu in FIVE FATHOMS DEAD (April 1946). Cayu = CAVU, or "Ceiling And Visibility Unlimited".)

The ghost zeppelin is first mentioned on page.4 in a headline touting its sighting in Maine. On

page 11, Red deduces that the ship has brought Yuttal and Hadi-Mot to New York ahead of the YANKEE BEAUTY: "The craft is easily capable of a non-stop ocean flight!" On pages 19 and 20 we get our first hint of the identity of the mystery ship, when Doc discovers clippings of airship articles in the pocket of the murdered Jules Fourmalier.

"He made a discovery. The scientific attainments which had come in for the unfortunate Jules's attention, as denoted in the pencilled sketches, had all been made within the past dozen or so years. It was as if Jules had been unable to secure information on airship development for that period, and had been catching up.

In one place, the lifting capacity of a gas compartment was accurately calculated, showing Jules had been an expert on lighter-than-air craft, even though a little out of date.

On a picture portraying an entire Zeppelin, Doc made the most interesting discovery of all. Near the bows of the craft, as if absent-mindedly pencilled there, were the identification letters ZX 03."

It isn't until page 40 that the action that follows lets up enough for anyone to follow up on this discovery. Ham Brooks uncovers these details:

"Ever hear of the airship AEROMUNDE?" Hec countered.

"Probably there are few living people who have NOT heard of it," Doc replied. "That is the Zeppelin which vanished more than a dozen years ago while on a flight over the Mediterranean. The body of the commander was found floating in the sea. But no trace of the ship itself was discovered. What happened to the AEROMUNDE is one of the world's great mysteries."

"The AEROMUNDE was the ZX 03 in European military files!" Ham said drastically. "And Jules Fourmalier was a member of the crew of the lost airship! There was also a red-headed man in the crew -- a fellow who answers the description of the dead chap upstairs."

At this point, things get busy again. Yuttal and Hadi-Mot kidnap Lady Nelia and carry her off to the phantom airship, hidden in the woodland of Maine. Doc and company pursue by autogyro and trimotor plane and finally afoot, which Doc does in the Tarzan tree-swinging mode. The six stow

away in the airship's gas bags after incapacitating the guard and making it look as if he ate poison berries.

Pages 72 and 73:

"They took up their positions in an inspection tunnel which, being remote from catwalks and motor sandalax, was not likely to be used.

Water ballast, spilling with a roar somewhere below, denoted the air siant was being lightened for the take-off. Soon the tail lifted, swiveling lazily.

With a heave that was painfully perceptible, the dirigible left the earth. The motors started -- five of them. Noise of the unuffled exhaust joined in a moaning symphony of power ...

Two days had gone. A third was well under way. The dirigible had met favorable air currents for most of the route across the Atlantic. No storms. Engines had been run at an economical speed, yet progress had been excellent due to tail winds.

It sailed the sky lanes like a modern ship, did this craft which had been lost to the ken of mankind for many years. The AEROMUNDE had been the queen of her class; she was still far from outdated."

Doc and his men are discovered and there ensues a running battle from one end of the zeppelin to the other, all while it is yet in flight. Doc unleashes anesthetic gas, Yuttal and Hadi-Mot counter with their "fluttering death" -- poisonous vampire bats bred by them in the lost oasis in the Sahara. We learn a good deal about the construction of the airship as the fight rages, as on page 81:

"The AEROMUNDE had originally been constructed as a ship of war. Stationed along the ridge were four machine-gun emplacements.

Doc's reaching the first of these, noted the rapid-firers were still in place, swathed in canvas weather jackets.

Access to this machine-gun nest was through one of the perpendicular keel-to-ridge shafts -- the ones which terminated in the control cabin."

But it is not until after the Zeppelin has arrived at the lost oasis, having flown over the impenetrable border of carnivorous plant jungle and then crashing to maroon protagonist and antagonist



alike, that we learn the history of the phantom airship. Fifteen years earlier, Yuttal and Hadi-Mot had discovered the impenetrable vegetable barrier and began gleaning the diamonds carried over by vultures with crow-like hoarding instincts. As Lady Nelia explains on page 92:

"They took the bones from the diamonds they had already found and hired a gang of thugs. These men got aboard the AEROMUNDE and seized the ship. They tied weights to the officers and threw them into the Mediterranean. You will recall that the body of the commander was found years ago. It must have broken away from the weight."

"The crew ... were enslaved and made to work the diamond mine ... Supplies are brought over the uninhabited desert and into the oasis in the airship. The original crew ... have been kept alive and forced to maintain the ship in repair, as well as teach Yuttal's men how it is operated."

Lady Nelia, Jules Fourmalier and Red worked together to steal linen and goldbeater skin used to repair the airship and made a balloon in which they escaped, each with a packet of diamonds which they'd mined themselves.

How much of this is true? I can prove only that the airship called AEROMUNDE (ZX 03) actually existed and disappeared under the circumstances described, and that fragments of the ship were discovered floating in the Mediterranean around the time THE LOST OASIS was written. I can also make a good case as to the identity of Lady Nelia (or, at least, that of the person on whom she was modeled), but I shall leave that as an exercise for the alert reader ...

For some reason, Dent deliberately misleads the reader as to when the AEROMUNDE actually disappeared. The phrase he uses throughout THE LOST OASIS is "over a dozen years ago", when the actual interval was slightly less than ten years. "Almost a decade"

is as easy to say as "over a dozen years", so there is no explanation for Dent's exaggeration of the time. (Unless, of course, he himself was misinformed.)

The fact behind the fiction reaches back the requisite "over a dozen" years ... seventeen years, to be precise. The story of the airship which Dent would call the AEROMUNDE begins in the headquarters of the Imperial German High Command in 1916.

America had entered the Great War following the incident of the LUSITANIA, and her entry threatened to tip the balance of power in favor of the Allies. The High Command decided that something had to be done to show the Americans that they were not as secure as they thought, safe behind the buffers of ocean separating her from Europe. They ordered the building of an airship designed for a specific mission: to cross the Atlantic and bomb New York, first with propaganda leaflets and later, if necessary, with actual bombs.

Unfortunately for German plans, the LZ 114 was not completed until 1918, by which time the conflict had been decided and the Armistice signed. The ship was redesignated L 72 and handed over to France along with the LZ 113 and the NORDSTERN as part of the reparations imposed by the Allies.

The French promptly rechristened the ship DIXMUDE and launched it with great ceremony in 1920. The ship measured 743.2 feet in length and 78.4 feet across, with a gas capacity of 2,418,200 cubic feet. It was powered by six Maybach engines of 260 horsepower apiece and had a top speed of 72.7 MPH. After

setting records for endurance and range on various testing flights, the DIXMUDE was put on a milk run between Toulon, France and Tangier, Morocco. It was the first regular transMediterranean air service.

The DIXMUDE made several long voyages as a Naval survey craft, including the world record endurance flight of 118 hours (4 days, 22 hours) in September 1923. On 18 December 1923, the airship left her base at Cuers-Pierrefeu, near Toulon, and set out across the Mediterranean for Algeria. From there she was to carry out a series of survey flights over the Sahara. She carried a complement of fifty-two men, six of them officers.

On 20 December radio contact was made with her to inform the commander -- Lieutenant de Vaisseau du Plessis de Grenedan -- that a severe storm was crossing his track. The airship was then about fifty miles south of Biskra, and de Grenedan immediately changed course to avoid the worst of the weather.

At 2 A.M. on 21 December, he radioed that the ship was battling a furious gale and that fuel was dangerously low. At 3:30 A.M. there was another short radiogram, which indicated that de Grenedan was going to attempt an emergency landing. Then, silence.

Thereafter followed the greatest peacetime air and sea search yet seen. Nothing comparable would follow until Amelia Earhart was lost. They scoured the Mediterranean and the northern fringe of the Sahara, in case the ship was drifting across North Africa.



On 24 December, a group of Sicilian fisherman received a grisly Christmas present when they found the body of de Grenedan floating in the sea. Questions were asked in fishing villages along the coast of southern Sicily, and several villagers declared the sea and sky had been lit up by glare in the early hours of the morning. No trace of the ship was found, however, and de Grenedan's body was the only one found.

The disappearance of the DIXMUDE was for France what the HINDENBURG later was for America. The country's airship fleet was broken up by 1925. The mystery was never satisfactorily explained. The best theory was that the ship's framework -- made as light as possible, since the ship was designed as a "height climber" -- had broken up in the gale and the escaping hydrogen had ignited.

Whatever the real truth, it

was not until April 1933 that any wreckage of the airship was recovered. The discovery of identifiable scraps of the hull and torsion wire created a sensation among aviation buffs -- including, no doubt, novice pilot Lester Dent. As Doc had said, probably no one had NOT heard of the DIXMUDE.

How likely is the rest of Dent's narrative?

That depends upon your willingness to accept things at face value. It was certainly possible for someone to stow away on board the airship before she took off from Cuers-Pierrefeu in much the same way as Doc and his men supposedly got aboard in Maine. The radiograms concerning the encounter with the storm could have been faked once the stowaways had control of the ship. The fact that only one body out of fifty-two was ever recovered tends to lend credence to the weighted chain explanation given by Lady Nelia.

Could the DIXMUDE make the trips ascribed to the AEROMUNDE? Yes. The ship had a maximum speed of 72.7 MPH. With a tail wind, it could easily maintain a cruising speed of 65 MPH, which would work out to 1,560 miles per day. Three days of travel would be 4,680 miles -- approximately equal to a Great Circle from Maine to Morocco. If the ship was able to make its full speed, the distance is increased to 5,234 miles.

Given three days to cross the Atlantic, it would take another two days to cross North Africa into the Sahara. But the DIXMUDE had already set a record of almost five days continuous flight, so that too is no problem.

As for the wreckage later found in the Mediterranean, there is a simple enough explanation. The airship was crippled on arriving at the lost oasis, stranding everyone within until, after the fighting, Doc and his men and the freed prisoners repaired it. They take off at the end of the story for Cairo, but it is possible the ship was forced out over the Mediterranean by bad weather and had to jettison material to stay airborne.

So which is the tail and which the dog? Where does fact end and fiction begin? How much of THE LOST OASIS is reality and how much fantasy?

That, as always, is for YOU to decide!





## INTRODUCING THE YELLOW PERIL

by Nick Carr

### Preface

"Such men had a certain life style,  
and when cut must bleed black."

- Robert Sampson, Pulpologist.

The Oriental evildoer was indeed a fixture of the bloody pulps down through the years during which the magazines flourished. Oddly however only a few are remembered. But despite this even today subconsciously we may compare them to the picture painted for us so uniquely on the screen by the late Boris Karloff in his role of Dr. Fu Manchu, G-8, the Master Spy, battled for instance Doktor Chu Lung, known as the Master of Death. He was "a slim-bodied, square shouldered man with long nailed fingers and eyes that burned like bright green coals". Another G-8 foe was Herr Matsu, a Japanese. "I don't hate anyone," he remarked, "I like being friendly with everyone even though I must kill them."

The Oriental was nothing new to Doc Savage or The Shadow. Richard Wentworth

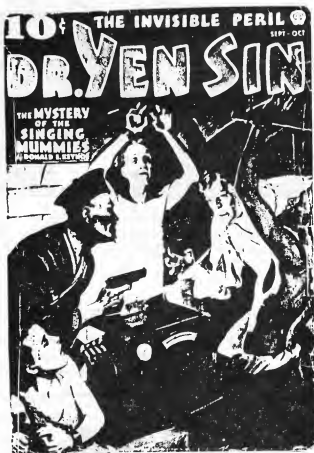


in his guise of The Spider fought Orientals numerous times. Such a battle is found in "The Spider and the Sons of Satan", March 1941.

Our concern however is with a most diabolical individual, a Chinese mastermind intent on world conquest. He had titles like the Crime Emperor, and the Invisible Peril. He was Dr. Yen



Sin. Although his adventures were told in only three novels, "The Mystery of the Dragon's Shadow", May-June 1936; "The Mystery of the Golden Skull", July-August 1936; and "The Mystery of the Singing Mummies", September-October 1936, he has achieved a high place in my Valhalla of Scoundrels. But not everyone will agree I know. In his excellent book THE PULPS, author Tony Goodstone writes: "Readers rejected all efforts by publishers to foster the popularity of evil-doers. Arch fiends like Dr. Yen Sin were shunned like the plague by the righteous kid."



In CHEAP THRILLS, by Ron Goulart, Dr. Yen Sin fares a little better. According to Goulart, author Donald E. Keyhoe made "Sin's eyes 'tawny yellow' and not the traditional cat green".

In his HERO PULP INDEX, Robert Weinberg mentions only that "Keyhoe was going to gain notoriety many years later with the flying saucer craze". Frank Gruber (who wrote THE PULP JUNGLE)

mentions Keyhoe in the book and also wrote short stories for the magazine. There has been one re-printing of the original novel by Weinberg's Pulp Press, in April 1975. This was as Pulp Classic #9. What makes it a collector's item among other things is that the cover was done by noted and very talented artist Franklyn Hamilton.



Mr. Harry Steeger, then President of Popular Publications had some very interesting comments on the evil Dr. Yen Sin: "I remember," he told me, "picking the name 'Syn' because it was sibilant and because the connotation was obviously evil. Then I picked the word 'Yen' because it was so patently Chinese and it seemed to fit nicely with Syn. However, it was shortly after publication that I found out the word 'yensin' (I don't know what the spelling really is) was the Jewish word for cohabitation. That was why I terminated the publication of the magazine. Had it been published in this present generation, I suppose it would

have been considered so mild that nobody could have looked forward to any unhappy repercussions."

Now, sit back and shake hands with a brother under the skin to Wu Fang. I give you Dr. Yen Sin.

first contracting until they were deadly black points. Then as the tawny yellow was revealed, it seemed as though a tiger looked out. A second longer that color remained flecked with green as bright as an emerald. Then swiftly the pupils enlarged again growing until they were like black pools--horrible, malignant."

Early in the first novel, one of the two heroes, Michael Traile, said of him: "He is the most dangerous fiend who ever walked the earth."



(1)

The Crime Emperor was an excellent surgeon and scientific genius. In addition to speaking Chinese and numerous other dialects, he had a working knowledge of English, Russian, German, and French. When he spoke his voice "was like a dagger sheathed in velvet". He did possess just a very slight guttural accent. Dr. Yen Sin was taller than most Chinese, "saffron skinned, with a satanic face, high yellow forehead, thin lips, black slanting eyebrows, mandarin mustache, and long yellow fingers with sharp nails". Manchurian blood flowed in his veins. He existed for the most part on a very sparse diet, usually consisting of hot tea, and a single dish of his choice. But it was his eyes that caught immediate attention from most people who came in close contact with him. "They were strange, almost mesmeric, the pupils





Even before Dr. Yen Sin made his first appearance in Chapter Three of the first novel, the reader was again told of his reputation: "He is devoid of every human emotion, except hate and greed," Traile said to Eric Gordon. "The man is evil incarnate."

The doctor's main headquarters were in China. We never learn the exact location. In America any knowledge of him was disavowed by the Chinese Legation. Yen Sin hated the Japanese with a passion. As his symbol he picked the deadly Cobra snake. Many of his followers were tattooed with a snake design. He had selected the capitol, Washington, D.C., to launch his bid for power. Once the State Department was made aware of the yellow fiend by Michael Traile, they placed him in full charge.

Also involved was the Department of Justice. Behind Yen Sin was the so-called "Invisible Empire", an international criminal league that spread throughout the world.

"Yen Sin's dream," spoke Traile to his companion, Gordon, agent of the Justice Department, "is to head a yellow rebellion against the white race."

Yen Sin was a master of disguises and used the art of make-up whenever it became necessary. He was also an expert in the technique of body pressure points. Here is one example: "Suddenly Yen Sin's talon-like fingers pressed at a spot at the back of the neck. A terrific pain shot through his foe's head, as though his brains were bursting. A cry rose to



Dr. Yen Sin sat before the talking Buddha





the man's lips, but his numbed throat made it only a tortured gasp. Paralyzed, he lay there like a dead man."

Another was Yen Sin's hypnotic power: "'Come closer, my child,' he spoke. The yellow doctor stood up, his oddly filmed eyes gazed down into hers. The pupils of Yen Sin's eyes suddenly enlarged to enormous size, until they were like black, bottomless pools. The girl swayed towards him. He stretched out one hand, touching her arm. A brief shiver ran over her slim body, then her eyes became glazed. In a queer monotone, the Crime Emperor began to speak. He never removed his gaze from the beautiful girl before him. A minute passed. Gradually her tense attitude relaxed. A strange, dreamy smile filled her eyes." Later on, because of a post-hypnotic suggestion, she would carry out his command.

Yen Sin sometimes wore on the index finger of his right hand a poison-needle ring. He seldom made use of it however, but when he did, the results were usually fatal. He did not tolerate failure even from his own followers without some form of punishment. "For attempting to deceive me," he told a certain guard, "thirty lashes and an hour on the rack."

(2)

In his book THE HISTORY OF TORTURE, author Daniel P. Mannix tells us in Chapter Fourteen, that "Orientals, especially the Chinese, have always been famous for their elaborate and ingenious torture".

Dr. Yen Sin was no exception to that rule of thumb. Torture became a watchword in his quest. As a result men died horribly at his hands: "Two yellow Chinese candles shone down from the head of an open coffin directly beneath them. An icy shudder went over Traile. He was looking down at the back of a corpse--but the dead man's face was staring upward! Traile stooped over the dead man. The



He seized the yellow man's pupils.

beheading had been done by a skilled surgeon's hand for the cut was straight. The blood stained stitches also gave evidence of surgical knowledge. Traile's lips tightened. Unless he was badly mistaken, this was the work of the yellow doctor himself."

When one particular individual turned against the yellow butcher, that man found himself trapped in a passage: "There was thud and a massive gate settled into place where the passage turned. (The sides of the passage were lined with red and gold circle-shaped patterns). Now from the circles a dark-stained blade was swiftly moving outward. A tortured shriek burst from the gangster's lips as the swords began to slash his sides. Then the body sagged, quivering, on the blades which had taken his life."

Dr. Yen Sin also used incense in the form of a most fragrant anesthetic; a chemical bomb that produced a rainbow



colored flame, consuming human flesh in mere seconds, leaving nothing but bones. His last device was a machine that turned people into mummies. (We can only wonder just what other fantastic weapons would have emerged from the crafty Oriental's brain if the series had continued). A favorite weapon--if you really called it that--was the 'Shi Muh'.

"Hold your breath!" Traile shouted. The next instant something like a gilded puff-ball popped softly against the automobile glass at his left. Weird, shiny tendrils spread out, became a golden haze obscuring the whole left side of the car. 'What was it?' Eric burst out. 'Shi Muh--the corpse flower of

Tibet,' replied Traile. 'It can kill in three seconds if we had breathed that dust.'

I have been asked how do I remember Dr. Yen Sin. Probably like this: At one end of the table sat a tall, robed figure. Like a living picture of Satan, a hideous yellow face looked around. The man's tawny eyes were drawn into narrow slits, the pupils contracted to black dots. It was a pointed, evil face--a face of ruthless power. His thin lips tightened. The surgeon-mandarin gazed impassively into space.

(3)

LASTLY just a few words about the heroes and one female who were involved in all three stories. First was MICHAEL TRAILLE, age twenty-seven, lean of face,



tanned the color of bronze, with dark, restless eyes. He was rather unique because everyone called him "the man who never slept". Because of an accident at a very early age, Traile was operated on by a Hindu physician who scraped or removed a vital portion of a specific lobe of the brain--that part which enables the subconscious to take over the mind. The child as a result could never sleep. His parents engaged a Yoga miracle worker when all else failed in an effort to keep him alive. He survived. At age two and one half years, three months following the accident, he was in excellent health. He grew up under the watchful eye of an American psychologist who noticed that he advanced mentally far beyond those of his age. "Be thankful," he told his friend Gordon, "that you can lie down and close your eyes and shut out the world for a few blessed hours. I have never known a single instant of forgetfulness in twenty seven years." Traile was a world traveller, an expert in many fields. He also had a working knowledge of ju-jitsu.



ERIC GORDON, his closest friend, was on hand as an agent of the Department of Justice. He was described as somewhat shorter than Traile with a compact build, blond hair and ruddy face. He was a pipe smoker.



SONYA DAMITRI, the lady on hand, was young and very beautiful, with strange exotic allure, dark and mysterious eyes and red lips. She had been forced to serve Yen Sin because her father, held somewhere in China, was under a death threat unless she obeyed. She came to the aid of Traile many times, saving him from death.

## EPILOGUE

THE Dr. Yen Sin novels are rightfully a part of the pulp heritage because, in the estimation of most collectors, they lived up to that one common denominator of such fiction. As Pulpologist Robert Sampson put it: "The stories had violence, dripping blood and murder."

Indeed the Valhalla of Scoundrels is a much better sanctuary because of this man.





Dear Editor,

The British Fantasy Awards were announced at the recent convention, Fantasycon VI, held in Birmingham, 3rd-5th October, 1980. The Awards were presented by the Guest of Honour, Ramsey Campbell, the Special Artist Guest, Jim Fitzpatrick, and the Master of Ceremonies, Karl Edward Wagner. The winners will receive a statuette designed by the British artist, Dave Carsons. The full results are:

Best Novel (termed The August Derleth Award):

1. Tanith Lee, DEATH'S MASTER
2. Patricia McKillop, HARPIST IN THE WIND
3. Phyllis Eisenstein, SORCERER'S SON

Best Short Fiction:

1. Fritz Leiber, "The Button Molder" (in WHISPERS 13/14)
2. Adrian Cole, "First Make Them Mad" (in FANTASY TALES 4)
3. Tanith Lee, "Red as Blood" (in F&SF, July 1979)

Best Small Press:

1. FANTASY TALES 5 (ed: Steve Jones & Dave Sutton)
2. WHISPERS 13/14 (ed: Stuart Schiff)
3. FANTASY MEDIA vol 1 (ed: Jon Harvey, Steve Jones, Gordon Larkin & Dave Sutton)

Best Film:

1. ALIEN; 2. ZOMBIES-DAWN OF THE DEAD; 3. LORD OF THE RINGS

Best Artist:

1. Stephen Fabian; 2. Dave Carsons; 3. Rowena Morrill

Fantasycon VI was jointly organised by the BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY and FANTASY MEDIA magazine. FCVI's guests included Dennis Etchinson, Tanith Lee, Dez Skinn and George Hay. FCVI also screened the British premiere of the film, THE LATHE OF HEAVEN. Previous Guest of Honours at past Fantasycons have included Basil Copper, Robert Aickman and Karl Wagner.

Fantasycon VII will be held in Birmingham over the weekend 10th-12th July, 1981, at the Grand Hotel. A full and varied programme is now in preparation. Supporting membership to FCVII is only £1.00 or \$3.00; all cheques, orders, etc, should be made out to "British Fantasy Conventions" and sent to Mike Chinn, 1 Buttery Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 7NS, UK.

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